



# Newsletter

Winter 1998/1999 - Issue 1

## Improving Flood Management

**I**n response to the January 1997 floods and the recurring flood threat in California's Central Valley, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and The Reclamation Board for the State of California are leading a basin-wide assessment to improve flood management and integrate the restoration of habitat along the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers and their tributaries.

### Recognizing a Need

Since the mid-1800s, the Sacramento and San Joaquin river systems have been modified and managed to provide flood protection, water supply, transportation and other water-related activities that have contributed to the economic growth of California and the nation. Over the years, society's needs have changed and lessons have been learned

regarding more effective approaches to long-term flood management and ecosystem restoration.

To meet the changing needs of the Central Valley, the flood management system must adapt to prepare for future

population increases in California and include approaches that take into account the many interrelated benefits offered by the river system. Federal, state and local government agencies have recognized the need for a more comprehensive approach to flood management and are committed to the development of a

flood management master plan as recommended in Governor Pete Wilson's Flood Emergency Action Team Final Report and the 1998 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act.

*See "Flood Management" on Page 2*



## Geographic Area

The great Central Valley of California contains two major river systems: the Sacramento River in the north and the San Joaquin River in the south. The Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins Comprehensive Study will address the combined watershed of these

two major river systems, a drainage area of more than 40,000 square miles. Cities in this area include Redding, Red Bluff, Colusa, Yuba City, Marysville, Sacramento,



Stockton, Manteca, Modesto, Merced and Fresno. ■

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Reclamation Board,  
State of California

U.S. Army Corps of  
Engineers  
Sacramento District



“Flood Management”

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Regional Coordination

The Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins Comprehensive Study will build upon existing information outlined in the San Joaquin River Management Program, the Upper Sacramento River Fisheries and Riparian Habitat Plan (SB1086), the Central Valley Improvement Act, the CALFED Bay-Delta Program and other studies and programs. All proposed measures will be coordinated and integrated with these and other programs. ■

General Planning Objectives

- *Improve flood management throughout the system*
- *Protect and restore riparian habitat, riverine and wetlands habitat systemwide.*
- *Resolve policy issues and address institutional issues.*

Forming Alternatives

There are a number of studies and reports already in existence that make recommendations that address the problems of flooding and ecosystem degradation in the Central Valley. The Study Team is reviewing this information, identifying previously suggested measures and working closely with stakeholders and technical experts to develop new approaches.

These measures may include:

- Re-operating the system reservoirs
- Reallocating storage
- Setting back levees
- Creating meanderbelts
- Creating new upstream storage
- Creating new bypasses
- Dredging

Project Timeline

Phase I

The first phase of the Comprehensive Study is 18 months long and will evaluate flood damage and related environmental problems along the rivers. The team will also identify flood damage reduction measures and associated environmental restoration measures to be modeled and evaluated in Phase II. Specifically, Phase I includes the development of a framework plan, to guide planning and analysis, development of a Final Post Flood Assessment and preliminary development of hydrologic models. Phase I will conclude in April 1999 with an Interim Report to Congress, which is not a decision document. It will include an executive summary of Phase I progress and a Final Post Flood Assessment.



Phase II

Phase II will continue the development and calibration of basin-wide hydrologic and hydraulic models and evaluate a broad array of measures to determine their flood damage reduction and associated environmental restoration effectiveness. The Phase II Report will include a programmatic Environmental Impact Statement/ Environ

Feb/Mar 1998	Nov/Dec 1998	April 1999	2001	Spring 2002
Initial Focus Group Research on Planning Parameters	Regional Meetings on Planning Parameters	Interim Report to Congress	Release of Draft Strategy for Flood Management and Related Environmental Restoration (Programmatic EIR/EIS)	Final Strategy and EIS/EIR (including an implementation plan)
		Identification of "Spinout Projects" and Early Implementation Projects		



mental Impact Report that describes the master strategy for flood damage reduction and integrated ecosystem restoration measures.

Combinations of measures will be formulated into a strategy for flood damage reduction and associated ecosystem restoration that will guide future implementation of site-specific measures. Floodplain management policy changes and recommendations on how to remove institutional barriers to a watershed approach will be a major element of the overall solution.

The flood damage reduction and integrated ecosystem restoration strategy will facilitate implementation of existing and proposed projects. Existing projects will be incorporated into the strategy. New features of the strategy that have broad support and that can be accomplished



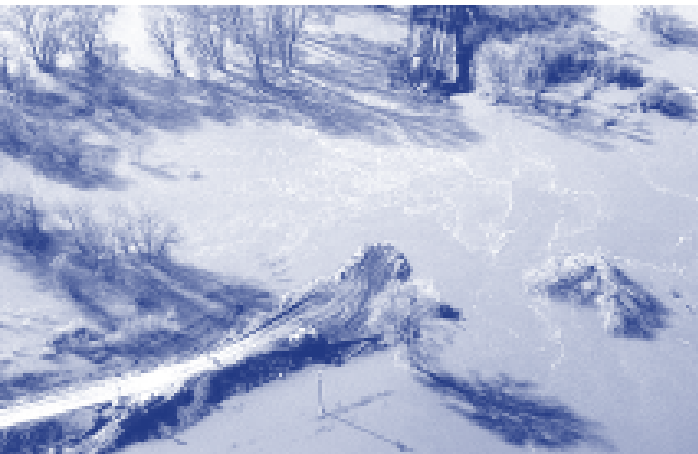
under existing authorities and funding will be “spun-off” for expeditious implementation under those authorities.

Some “early implementation projects,” for which new authorities are needed, will be identified, developed to the extent possible,

and recommended for authorization and implementation. Early implementation projects must address identifiable flooding problems, be consistent with the general planning objectives, demonstrate broad acceptability, and be readily implementable. ■

### Tell Us What You Think

Public involvement is essential to the development of the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins Comprehensive Study. The Study Team has already held informal



meetings and workshops with interested stakeholders and is planning many more. In Spring 1999 there will be a number of public meetings throughout the Central Valley to elicit input on the work done to date and future steps. Check your mail for meeting notices or call the Study Team directly to find out how you can get involved. ■

**Please call the  
Project Team  
for more  
Information  
916.557.5140**

*“The most effective management of the flood plains of the major rivers may not be a primarily ‘structural approach’ of building levees and dams, but rather a combination of structural and nonstructural approaches that considers the many interrelated benefits to society offered by river system.”*

— Army Corps of Engineers

*“A comprehensive study of the system should closely evaluate nonstructural alternatives on an equal level with structural approach.”*

— Final Report of the Flood Emergency Action Team

*“A well-balanced blend of both structural and nonstructural approaches in almost any area will lead to optimal flood protection.”*

— Final Report of the Flood Emergency Action Team

Participating Agencies

Because of its comprehensive nature, the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins Comprehensive Study must take full advantage of the expertise and capabilities of the various participating agencies. An Executive Committee,

which meets quarterly, is co-chaired by the Army Corps of Engineers and The State of California Reclamation Board. The Committee was established to assist in resolving emerging policy issues and to ensure consistent and full coordination. ■

Executive Committee

Federal

- Army Corps of Engineers
- Fish and Wildlife Service
- Forest Service
- Environmental Protection Agency
- CALFED Bay-Delta Program
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Bureau of Land Management
- Geological Survey
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- Bureau of Reclamation

State

- The State of California Reclamation Board
- Department of Fish and Game
- State Water Resources Control Board
- Department of Water Resources
- CALFED Bay-Delta Program
- Department of Parks & Recreation
- Department of Boating & Waterways
- State Lands Commission
- Office of Emergency Services
- Department of Food & Agriculture



Comprehensive Study

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Forwarding Service Requested